

# THE DIGNITY INDEX. Scoring Guide

V2.0

**THE DIGNITY INDEX** is an eight-point scale that measures what we do when we disagree. Each scale point represents a particular mindset toward the other side, ranging from **ONE** – which sees no dignity at all in the other side – to **EIGHT**, which sees the dignity in everyone, no matter what. This Scoring Guide includes a set of quotes and traits that are characteristic of each mindset. Scoring involves matching language in the passage with the quotes or traits of a particular scale point.

1

They're not even human. They don't deserve to live.

They are ruining us.

We have a moral duty to destroy them before they destroy us.

ONE...

- has an absolute belief in their own righteousness and in the life-threatening subhuman evil of the other side.
- cannot bear the pain of any blame or criticism; they could kill a critic.
- feels virtuous and heroic about calling for violence and acting on it.

**DIFFERENTIATING ONE AND TWO:**

**ONE** says that the other side is less than human, is “destroying us,” and should be attacked, killed, or eliminated. **TWO** believes that the other side is evil and is going to “ruin us if we let them,” but is not calling for or committing violence. **TWO** is “us or them.” **ONE** is “all us and no-them.”

2

Those people are evil. They're going to ruin our country if we let them. It's us or them.

They're not just bad people; they're promoting evil.

Those people are a danger to everything we value.

TWO...

- believes the other side is an existential threat.
- talks about seceding or moving to another country to get away from “those people.”
- tells stories that “prove” the evil of the other side.
- longs to see the other side suffer, to “see them finally get what they deserve.”

**DIFFERENTIATING TWO AND THREE:**

**TWO** says “those are evil people trying to ruin us. They're an existential threat.” **THREE** says “those are bad people trying to hurt us.” **TWO** is “us or them.” **THREE** is “us versus them.”

3

We're the good people; they're the bad people. It's us versus them.

They look down on us and mock our values.

Those people hate us and want to hurt us.

THREE...

- makes a personal attack on the other, targeting performance, competence, appearance, background, character or morals.
- wants to weaken the other side and make them fail.
- ascribes all the good qualities to “us” and all the bad qualities to “them.”
- takes credit for good outcomes and blames the other side for bad outcomes.

**DIFFERENTIATING THREE AND FOUR:**

**THREE** turns against the other side, while **FOUR** turns away from the other side. **THREE** makes a personal attack on the other side, while **FOUR** avoids the other side. **THREE** disdains the other side; **FOUR** dismisses them. **THREE** is “us versus them.” **FOUR** is “us and them” – but never “we.”

4

We're better than those people. They don't really belong. They don't really share our values.

They're working for those people, not for us.

We avoid those people. They're different. We don't really have anything in common.

FOUR...

- dismisses the other side as not really worth talking to.
- denies similarities, highlights points of difference, downplays common interests and values.
- will distort or rename an opponent's position to make it sound unappealing (this could be lower than **FOUR**, depending on what the distortion implies).

**DIFFERENTIATING FOUR AND FIVE:**

**FOUR** prefers to stay separate and avoid discussion. **FIVE** speaks openly, states its goals, explains its views, makes a point of listening – and never makes any show of contempt. At **FIVE** (and above) criticisms of the other side are grounded in the record, based on facts, decisions, actions, and outcomes.

5

The other side has a right to be here and a right to be heard. They belong here, too.

I'll listen to what they have to say.

I share my views with no contempt, so they're easier for others to hear.

**FIVE...**

- speaks openly, explaining their views, but never with contempt.
- does more than state vague goals; they state views they know others oppose.
- listens intently and sincerely to the other side without any expressions of contempt.
- challenges the other side on facts, actions, decisions, and outcomes, never with insults or negative labels.

**DIFFERENTIATING FIVE AND SIX:**

**FIVE** speaks openly and listens respectfully, but doesn't yet seek common ground with the other side. **SIX** believes they have a duty to talk to the other side, find common interests and values, and use them as a basis for cooperation.

6

We talk to the other side, searching for the values and interests we share, and using them as a basis for cooperation.

We don't let our disagreements keep us from cooperating on the things we agree on.

We have more in common than we think.

**SIX...**

- can see the good in the other side and will acknowledge their skills and accomplishments.
- finds it deeply satisfying to cooperate with the other side.
- feels affection for their partners on the other side; they are proud of the relationship and feel it is special.

**DIFFERENTIATING SIX AND SEVEN:**

**SIX** engages with the other side, but tends to retreat when finding areas of strong disagreement. **SIX** doesn't explore the possibility that they might be wrong or might be contributing to the problem. **SEVEN** believes they could be wrong, and it doesn't hurt them to hear their views criticized, so when they run into conflict, they keep listening.

7

I want to discuss our disagreements because I'm open to changing my mind. I might be wrong.

I'm curious about what people have been through and how they came to believe what they believe.

I am willing to take criticism from my own side for working with the other side.

**SEVEN...**

- can offer genuine apologies and forgiveness even after painful conflicts.
- has a great deal of humility, especially in their ability to be self-critical, admit mistakes, and even consider how they might be contributing to the problem.
- sees through the polarization game. When others try to incite anger and pit people against each other, they call it out and urge others not to fall for it.
- will challenge contempt to defend the dignity of someone being demonized.

**DIFFERENTIATING SEVEN AND EIGHT:**

**SEVEN** can take the pain of being criticized; **EIGHT** can take the pain of being hated. **SEVEN** can defend the dignity of the other side even when it costs them belonging; **EIGHT** can stand up for the dignity of the most demonized even when it puts them in danger. **EIGHT** is a fuller expression of the love and humility and capacity for self-criticism that emerges in **SEVEN**.

8

Everyone is born with inherent worth, so I treat everyone with dignity no matter what.

I don't condemn anyone. If I'd suffered what they did, I might have done what they did.

**EIGHT...**

- can respond to contempt by treating the other person with dignity. That's how they love their enemies.
- has no sense of moral superiority. They don't look down on anyone.
- will defend the dignity of the most demonized, even when it puts them in danger.
- believes that we human beings are inseparable – one body with many parts – and when we try to get away from each other, we only make things worse.
- wants to solve problems without demanding a particular approach. They want solutions that protect the dignity of every human being, and they don't care who gets credit.